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**COUNTERFEIT COMPACT DISC LABEL MAKER SENTENCED
TO 5 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON, THE MAXIMUM PERMITTED**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that MOHAMED SOW was sentenced in Manhattan federal court today to the statutory maximum term of five years in prison and fined \$125,000 for manufacturing and selling thousands of counterfeit labels for audio compact discs. SOW was convicted on January 13, 2003, after a one-week trial before United States District Judge LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN.

In imposing the statutory maximum sentence, Judge SWAIN called music bootlegging "theft and fraud" and said that SOW's counterfeiting activities were a serious crime that "diverted money from the people who are entitled to it for their work and their artistry." In imposing the \$125,000 fine, the maximum provided under the applicable sentencing guidelines, Judge SWAIN said that SOW's conduct caused "staggering" losses to the recording industry.

It was revealed at the January 2003 trial that SOW operated four copy shops in Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn, where he and his employees manufactured and sold thousands of counterfeit labels for CDs, made on color photocopiers. According to trial testimony, approximately 25,000 counterfeit labels were seized by law enforcement agents at SOW's stores in Manhattan and the Bronx.

At one location, law enforcement agents seized approximately 116 cases of 11 x 17 copy paper, sufficient to manufacture approximately 208,800 labels. SOW produced the counterfeit labels at his four stores: Copy Solution Center at 163 W. 121 Street and Fouta Copy Center located at 1941 Seventh Avenue, both in Manhattan; Fouta Fashion located at 1946 and 1942 Westchester Avenue, the Bronx; and Copy Solution Center located at 796 Franklin Avenue, in Brooklyn.

According to the charges and testimony at trial, SOW reproduced CD covers that were later illegally sold with bootlegged compact disks from street vendors. At two locations, SOW operated his counterfeiting operations out of the hidden back sections of his stores, while selling clothing and telephone calling cards to the public from the front portions of the stores.

SOW faced a maximum term of imprisonment of 5 years and a statutory maximum fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss derived from the offense. SOW was immediately remanded by

Judge SWAIN to begin serving his sentence.

Mr. COMEY praised the joint efforts of the United
States

Secret Service, the New York City Police Department's Bronx
District Attorney's Squad, and the Recording Industry Association
of America.

Assistant United States Attorney STEVEN D. FELDMAN is
in charge of the prosecution.

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